

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. **Canceled**
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17. **(Currently Amended)** A tap for a gas or liquid cylinder, comprising:

a tap body having a root end portion, said root end portion having a free end and an exteriorly threaded section adapted to be engaged in a threaded opening of a gas or liquid cylinder;

an elongated ~~value~~ valve actuating stem means mounted in said tap body, said stem means having a longitudinal axis;

a primary valve means provided in said tap body at a side of the root end portion opposite said free end; and

a secondary check valve means having a movable piston element urged by a biasing spring to a closed position in engagement with a check valve seat on the root end portion; said piston element being disposed in an open-ended sleeve tube retention member fixed to the root end portion of the tap body,

said stem means being axially movable in a first direction to open said primary valve means to permit fluid flow through said tap body from an inlet to an outlet thereof, and in a second opposite direction to close said primary valve means to shut-off fluid flow from said inlet to said outlet of said tap body, said stem means holding said secondary check valve means in an open position at least when said primary valve means is in an open position,

said root end portion having a reduced diameter section extending between the exteriorly threaded section and the free end of the root end portion, said reduced diameter section having a smaller external diameter than the exteriorly threaded section and the check valve seat being formed on said reduced diameter section, and said retention member having one end thereof fixed to said root end portion about said reduced diameter section and being ~~threaded~~ adapted at a free opposite open end thereof to permit connection of a ~~plunger tube thereto~~ an accessory to said retention member;

wherein said piston element comprises a piston head engageable with said check valve seat and a piston skirt extending from said piston head towards said free opposite end of said retention member, said piston skirt being guided for axial movement in the retention member in an inner annular shoulder thereof and by an outer annular flange of said piston element, said check valve biasing spring being disposed about said piston skirt, said piston skirt having a hollow interior closed at a first end thereof by said piston head, said piston skirt hollow interior being in fluid communication with the interior of the retention member at a second opposite open end of the piston skirt, and by at least one orifice through the piston element between said closed first end and the flange of the piston element.

18. (Previously Presented) A tap according to Claim 17, wherein the check valve seat is formed at the free end of the reduced diameter section.

19. (Previously Presented) A tap according to Claim 17, wherein said biasing spring is disposed in a spring chamber and the fluid flow path through the check valve means bypasses said spring chamber.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A tap according to Claim 17, wherein the retention member is threaded at its free opposite opened end to permit for connection of a ~~plunger tube thereto is an internal thread~~ an accessory to said retention member.

22. (Currently Amended) A tap according to Claim 17, wherein said primary valve means is an inverted seat valve means, said stem means being slightly spaced from said piston element when said primary valve means is in a closed position so that said primary valve means ~~is open~~ is opened first followed by opening of said secondary

check valve means when said stem means is moved in a said first direction, and the secondary check valve means is allowed to close first followed by closing of the primary valve means when said stem means is moved in said second opposite direction.

23. (Previously Presented) A tap according to Claim 17, wherein said retention member has a smaller external diameter than the minimum base diameter of the exteriorly threaded section.

24. (New) A tap according to Claim 17, wherein a sealing ring is disposed in an annular groove of the outer annular flange of the piston element.